

OCI No. 1133/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
6 April 1966

## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Political Situation in South Vietnam  
(As of 2:00 P.M.)

1. A source reporting to the US Embassy on the consultative session for the national political congress today has confirmed the absence of Buddhist Institute representatives. The general consensus reached at the meeting was that the national political congress should meet next week and agree to the immediate establishment of a constituent assembly, half of whose members would be appointed and the other half drawn from the municipal and provincial councils. This arrangement has been proposed by the government previously, but has not satisfied the Buddhist leadership.

2. The US Embassy has confirmed the burning of a Vietnamese newspaper office this evening by Buddhist students in Saigon, and noted that the paper had been critical of demonstrations. Press reports indicate that bands of demonstrators were still in the streets at 11:00 P.M. (Saigon time), and, as for the past two nights, that police were using tear gas and other riot control measures.

3. US Embassy officials in Hue have reported that a public meeting of some 8,000 persons was held this morning. Buddhist representatives called for the dissolution of the military Directorate and for a change in the US policy of support for Premier Ky. There were no uniformed military personnel present at the meeting.

4. There are conflicting reports concerning the status of Deputy Premier Co in Da Nang. Earlier information from Vietnamese government officials indicated

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that Co was being detained there by I Corps Commander General Chuan. However, Co in statements to the press today gave no indication of anything being amiss, and declared that he was working towards a peaceful settlement of the dispute.

5. According to a late report, Military Security Service Chief Colonel Loan--earlier reported to have been given command of the Vietnamese Marine battalions and tanks at Da Nang--has now arrived at the air base from Saigon, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Loan appeared somewhat emotional, and declared that he might attempt to move troops into the city within the next 24 hours. He further declared that the Marine battalion commanders were impatient, and might attempt a move without orders from higher authority.

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OCI No. 1132/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
6 April 1966

## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Political Situation in South Vietnam  
(As of 10:00 A.M.)

1. A consultative session to prepare for a national political congress was convened by the military government in Saigon today, and was attended by some 30 political and religious figures. However, key Buddhist leaders have reportedly boycotted the session, and one Saigon delegate told the press that no progress was possible without Buddhist participation. He also added that there were no delegates from Hue or Da Nang, or from the central highlands area. In a speech last night, Buddhist Institute Chairman Tam Chau referred to the plan for a national political congress as a retreat by the government from earlier promises for a constituent assembly. Press reports today alleging that a compromise has been worked out between Premier Ky and the Buddhists remain rather doubtful, although Ky may be considering some further concessions to meet Buddhist demands.

2. A Buddhist communique signed by Tam Chau and issued this morning announced the closing of the Buddhist Institute for administrative reasons. In past political crises, the Institute has been closed to remove it as a target for anti-Buddhist acts, and, at the same time, to allow the Institute leadership to avoid charges of direct involvement in Buddhist street demonstrations.

3. Press reports state that Buddhist students are demonstrating in the streets of Saigon during the evening hours of 6 April (Saigon time). Thus far, a Vietnamese newspaper office has reportedly been

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ransacked. According to the press, national police have not responded quickly to quell the current disturbances. No other details are as yet available.

4. There does not appear to be any prospect of immediate fighting between pro and antigovernment troops in Da Nang, although Premier Ky has improved his capability for moving forcefully into the city. Thus far, seven of a scheduled ten M-41 tanks have been flown to Da Nang Air Base in US aircraft to provide armored support for the Vietnamese Marine battalions, should they be ordered into the city. Before leaving for Da Nang today, Military Security Chief Colonel Loan told an American official that Premier Ky had placed him in command of the government troops there. Loan stated that he had been given the authority to move troops into the city when the tactical situation became favorable, but he did not think that this would be possible for two or three more days. Loan also declared that Deputy Premier General Co, who had remained behind in Da Nang yesterday, was now being detained there by I Corps Commander General Chuan. Co yesterday had tried to order the Vietnamese Marine battalions back to Saigon, but was apparently done only under pressure from Chuan. There are other signs of increasing strains within the Military Directorate concerning the eventual use of force by the government in Da Nang.

5. Elsewhere, the press has reported that a demonstration by some 10,000 persons took place in Hue today. According to official reports, the evacuation of US civilians from the Hue area continued today. However, First Division commander General Nhuan has assured US officials there that they will receive his military protection, and that his previous "differences" with the Saigon government had been resolved.

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